Executive Proclamation

State of South Dakota
Office of the Governor

Whereas, In 1947, Congressman Francis H. Case endorsed the concept of a national cemetery in this part of the country that gained the active support of various South Dakota veterans' organizations and the South Dakota Veterans Department; and,

Whereas, A site was chosen near Sturgis, South Dakota, in a portion of the Fort Meade Military Reservation, consisting of 105.9 acres of land transferred to the Department of the Army in April 1948, for national cemetery purposes; and,

Whereas, Four burials took place on September 27, 1948, and three additional burials took place on September 30, 1948, all seven casualties of World War II who lost their lives on battlefields around the world, and were finally returned to their final resting place beneath their native soil; and,

Whereas, On October 3, 1948, the Fort Meade National Cemetery was dedicated with high ranking government and military officials and representatives of various veteran and civic organizations in attendance; and,

Whereas, Since those initial interments, the remains of over 17,800 gallant men and women who served their country, as well as eligible dependents, have been laid to rest. Annual burials have risen from 41 by the end of 1948 up to 634 in 2002; and,

Whereas, In 1949, the name was officially changed to the Black Hills National Cemetery in recognition of its location within an area of great historical significance and to avoid confusion with the Fort Meade military installation in Maryland and the Fort Meade Veterans Hospital in South Dakota; and,

Whereas, Jurisdiction of the cemetery was transferred from the Department of the Army to the Veterans Administration in compliance with the National Cemetery Act of 1973; and,

Whereas, An open house will be held on October 2, 2003, at 3:30 p.m., MDT, to commemorate the 55th Anniversary of the Black Hills National Cemetery:

Now, Therefore, I, M. Michael Rounds, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim October 2, 2003, as

BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY DAY

in South Dakota.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Twenty-fifth Day of September in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Three.

M. Michael Rounds, Governor

Attest:

Chris Nelson, Secretary of State